

PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF RESIDENTIAL AND NONCOMMERCIAL USERS.

(B) THE OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL SHALL MAKE SUCH INVESTIGATIONS AND REQUEST THE COMMISSION TO INITIATE SUCH PROCEEDINGS AS THAT OFFICE DEEMS NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF RESIDENTIAL AND NONCOMMERCIAL USERS.

(C) CONSISTENT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF ANY APPLICABLE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, THE OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL SHALL HAVE FULL ACCESS TO THE COMMISSION'S RECORDS AND, EXCEPT AS HEREINAFTER PROVIDED, SHALL HAVE THE BENEFIT OF ALL OTHER FACILITIES OR INFORMATION OF THE COMMISSION IN CARRYING OUT ITS DUTIES. THE OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL SHALL BE ENTITLED TO CALL UPON THE ASSISTANCE OF THE COMMISSION STAFF IF THE [[COMMISSION]]STAFF DETERMINES THAT THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE [[COMMISSION'S]] STAFF'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND IF THE [[COMMISSION]]STAFF AND THE OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL AGREE THAT THE SHARING, IN A PARTICULAR MATTER, IS CONSISTENT WITH [[THE INTERESTS OF RESIDENTIAL AND NONCOMMERCIAL USERS]] THEIR RESPECTIVE INTERESTS .

(D) THE OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL MAY RECOMMEND TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATION ON ANY MATTER WITHIN OR RELATED TO THE COMMISSION'S JURISDICTION WHICH IN ITS JUDGMENT WOULD AFFECT THE INTERESTS OF NONCOMMERCIAL OR RESIDENTIAL USERS.

16.

(A) THE ANNUAL BUDGET SHALL PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR THE COMMISSION TO HIRE, DEVELOP, AND ORGANIZE A STAFF TO PERFORM ITS FUNCTIONS UNDER THIS ARTICLE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE ANALYSIS OF ALL DATA SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION AND THE PREPARATION OF A STAFF POSITION IN MATTERS PENDING BEFORE THE COMMISSION. THE STAFF SHALL INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO ECONOMISTS, COST OF CAPITAL EXPERTS, RATE DESIGN EXPERTS, ACCOUNTANTS, ENGINEERS, TRANSPORTATION SPECIALISTS, LAWYERS, AND ANY OTHER EXPERTS DEEMED NECESSARY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMISSION. THE COMMISSION MAY, FROM TIME TO TIME, RETAIN ADDITIONAL EXPERTS AS REQUIRED FOR A PARTICULAR MATTER. THOSE LAWYERS WHO REPRESENT THE COMMISSION STAFF IN PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COMMISSION SHALL BE ORGANIZED AND OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY OF THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL.

(B) THE COMMISSION SHALL HIRE HEARING EXAMINERS TO THE EXTENT REQUIRED. HEARING EXAMINERS SHALL CONSTITUTE A SEPARATE ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE COMMISSION AND SHALL PERFORM NO OTHER STAFF FUNCTIONS THAN THOSE RELATING TO HEARINGS.

(C) THE COMMISSION SHALL HIRE PERSONAL STAFF FOR THE COMMISSIONERS TO THE EXTENT REQUIRED TO ADVISE COMMISSIONERS, DRAFT PROPOSED ORDERS AND RULINGS, AND